

The Murders of Crispus and Fausta 255

who affirmed his devotion to God and declared his horror at the sight and smell of the blood of sacrifice. "The God I serve/' said Constantino, "demands from His worshippers nothing but a pure mind and a spirit undefiled." Then he reminded Sapor how the persecutors of the Church had been destroyed root and branch, and how one of them, Valerian, had graced the triumph of a Persian king. He, therefore, confidently committed the Christians, who "honoured by their presence .some of the fairest regions of Persia/' to the generosity and protection of their sovereign.

This remarkable letter suggests that Sapor had been alarmed at the growth of Christianity in his dominions, and by no means looked upon his Christian subjects as lending lustre and distinction to his realm. Whether he replied to what Iu* may well have regarded as a veiled threat, we do not know, but in 335 we hear of what Eusebius calls ** an insurrection of barbarians in the East,"* and Constantino prepared for war against Persia* In other words, Sapor had fomented an insurrection in the provinces ' beyond the Tigris and was claiming his lost heritage* Constantino laid his military plans before the hisho]># of his court. These declared their intention of accompanying him into the field, to the great delight, we are assured, of the Emperor, who ordered a tent to be made for his service in the shape of a church, while Sapor, in alarm, sent envoys to sue for a peace which the most peaceful-minded of kings (wpr/fj #<*)«• was only too ready to grant. Such

* /Je I "if a CoiwA, iv., p. 56.